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OFFICE OF PETITIONS

In re Application of	:	
Creswell, et al.	:	
Application No. 09/996,645	:	ON PETITION
Filed: 28 November, 2001	:	
Attorney Docket No. 1999-0549//02685/5447	:	

This is a decision on a petition filed¹ on 12 December, 2005, under 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b).

For the reasons set forth below, the petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) is **GRANTED**.

NOTES:

There is no indication that Petitioner herein was ever empowered to prosecute the instant application. If Petitioner desires to receive future correspondence regarding this application, the appropriate power of attorney documentation must be submitted. A courtesy copy of this decision will be mailed to Petitioner. However, all future correspondence will be directed to the address of record until such time as appropriate instructions are received to the contrary.

As a result, the Notice of Change of Address filed on 12 December, 2005, has *not* been honored as of this writing.

¹ The petition form carried Application No. 09/966,645, rather than the appropriate Application No. 09/996,645.

BACKGROUND

The record indicates:

- Petitioner failed to reply timely to the Notice of Allowance/Allowability and Fees Due mailed on 10 May, 2005, with reply due under a non-extendable deadline on or before 10 August, 2005;
- the application went abandoned by operation of law after midnight 10 August, 2005;
- the Office mailed the Notice of Abandonment on 26 October, 2005;
- Petitioner filed the instant petition on 12 December, 2005—but the petition form carried an incorrect application number² and so was not addressed until this writing—with fee, reply in the form of the fees due, and made the statement of unintentional delay—thus, Petitioner appears to have satisfied the regulatory requirements under 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b).

STATUTES, REGULATIONS AND ANALYSIS

Congress has authorized the Commissioner to "revive an application if the delay is shown to the satisfaction of the Commissioner to have been "unavoidable." 35 U.S.C. §133 (1994).³

The regulations at 37 C.F.R. §1.137(a) and (b) set forth the requirements for a petitioner to revive a previously unavoidably or unintentionally, respectively, abandoned application under this congressional grant of authority. The language of 35 U.S.C. §133 and 37 C.F.R. §1.137(a) is clear, unambiguous, and without qualification: the delay in tendering the reply to the outstanding Office action, as well as filing the first petition seeking revival, must have been unavoidable for the reply now to be accepted on petition.⁴

Delays in responding properly raise the question whether delays are unavoidable.⁵ Where there is

² The petition form carried Application No. 09/966,645, rather than the appropriate Application No. 09/996,645.

³ 35 U.S.C. §133 provides:
35 U.S.C. §133 Time for prosecuting application.
Upon failure of the applicant to prosecute the application within six months after any action therein, of which notice has been given or mailed to the applicant, or within such shorter time, not less than thirty days, as fixed by the Commissioner in such action, the application shall be regarded as abandoned by the parties thereto, unless it be shown to the satisfaction of the Commissioner that such delay was unavoidable.

⁴ Therefore, by example, an unavoidable delay in the payment of the Filing Fee might occur if a reply is shipped by the US Postal Service, but due to catastrophic accident, the delivery is not made.

⁵ See: *Changes to Patent Practice and Procedure; Final Rule Notice*, 62 *Fed. Reg.* at 53158-59 (October 10, 1997), 1203 *Off. Gaz. Pat. Office* at 86-87 (October 21, 1997).

a question whether the delay was unavoidable, Petitioners must meet the burden of establishing that the delay was unavoidable within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §133 and 37 C.F.R. §1.137(a).⁶ And the Petitioner must be diligent in attending to the matter.⁷ Failure to do so does not constitute the care required under Pratt, and so cannot satisfy the test for diligence and due care.

(By contrast, unintentional delays are those that do not satisfy the very strict statutory and regulatory requirements of unavoidable delay, and also, by definition, are not intentional.⁸))

Allegations as to
Unintentional Delay

The requirements for relief under the provisions of 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) are: petition, fee, reply, showing of unintentional delay, and—where appropriate—a terminal disclaimer and fee.

It appears that Petitioner has satisfied the requirements of the regulation.

CONCLUSION

Because Petitioner appears to have satisfied the regulatory requirements, regulation, the petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) is **granted**.

The application is released to Publications Branch to be processed into a patent in due course.

Telephone inquiries concerning this decision may be directed to the undersigned at (571) 272-3214.



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⁶ See: In re Application of G, 11 USPQ2d 1378, 1380 (Comm'r Pats. 1989).

⁷ See: Diligence in Filing Petitions to Revive and Petitions to Withdraw the Holding of Abandonment, 1124 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office 33 (March 19, 1991). It was and is Petitioner's burden to exercise diligence in seeking either to have the holding of abandonment withdrawn or the application revived. See 1124 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office supra.

⁸ Therefore, by example, an unintentional delay in the reply might occur if the reply and transmittal form are to be prepared for shipment by the US Postal Service, but other pressing matters distract one's attention and the mail is not timely deposited for shipment.